# SAMCollection: The Present is Unstable Opens at SAM on 2 October

## Description

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**Singapore Art Museum** (SAM) is opening its most experimental collection presentation to date, and it is one that refuses to sit still. *SAMCollection: The Present is Unstable* opens to the public on 2 October 2026 at SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark, with a selection of artworks that rotate over the course of the show.

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SAMCollection: The Present is Unstable runs from 2 October 2026 to 18 July 2027 (Image: Singapore Art Museum)

The exhibition asks a deceptively simple question: how can a museumâ??s collection stay responsive to a world in flux? Rather than settle on one answer, SAM lets the display shift with the times. Visitors encounter a first set of works from 2 October 2026, with a second set introduced from February 2027, giving anyone who returns a genuinely different show the second time round.

## An exhibition that changes with the world

The third in a series drawing on the Collection of SAM, *The Present is Unstable* is built around periodic rotation. As works are brought together and later swapped out, fresh connections and juxtapositions surface across the gallery, threading questions from different moments into the world we live in now. Instead of a single fixed narrative, visitors are invited to chart their own path and form their own links between the ideas on show.

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Among the opening highlights is Hao Jingbanâ??s *I Witness*, a three-channel installation commissioned by the Han Nefkens Foundation, Mori Art Museum, M+, Hong Kong, and SAM. As part of the opening programme, visitors can join a conversation with Hao Jingban and Han Nefkens, alongside a curator-led tour, with further public programmes running throughout the exhibition.

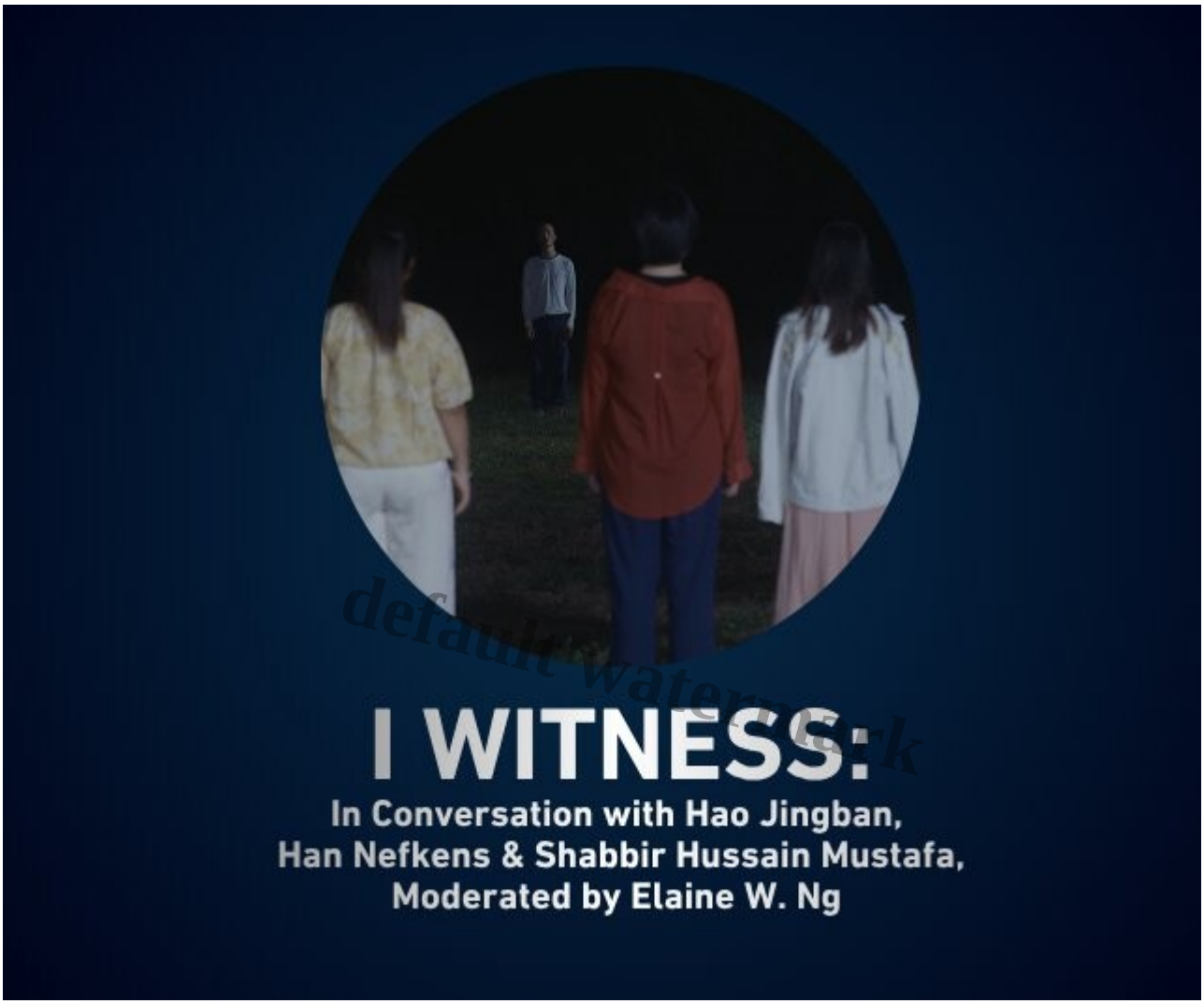
## What you need to know

The show runs at Gallery 4, Level 3, SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark from 2 October 2026 to 18 July 2027. Admission is under General Admission and is free for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents. If you are planning an arts-filled few months, it pairs well with National Gallery Singaporeâ??s Slow Saturday and the earlier AstaGuru Indian art exhibition. Those who prefer to make their own work can also check out the free Gallery Sketch drop-in sessions.

More details are on the Singapore Art Museum website.

## Inside the First Display

Chief Curator Shabbir Hussain Mustafa says the exhibition asks a simple question: how can works from the past help us understand the present? â??Since SAM opened in 1996, its Collection has grown alongside the changing conditions of contemporary art in Singapore, Southeast Asia and the wider world,â?• he explains. â??But a museum collection cannot remain only as a record of what has been acquired or preserved. By allowing artworks to move in and out of the gallery on a constant basis, the exhibition invites our publics to see how older histories, recent acquisitions and current concerns can speak to one another.â?•




The first set of works includes Sin Wai Kinâ??s *The Time of Our Lives* (2024), Nadiah Bamadhajâ??s *Casting Spells for the Movement* (2021), Manny Montelibanoâ??s *Sorry for the Inconvenience* (2011â??ongoing) and Jason Weeâ??s *Labyrinths* (2017), alongside Hao Jingbanâ??s *I Witness* (2025) and Gary-Ross Pastranaâ??s *Water Cuts (stone)* (2017). Together, the works explore embodiment, movement and memory, with several inviting visitors to physically step into or interact with the piece rather than simply observe it from a distance.

From the end of 2026, the display will gradually transform, introducing works by artists from the region and beyond, including Lim Tzay Chuen, Singaporeâ??s representative at the 2005 Venice Biennale, Singapore-born artist Erika Tan, Naeem Mohaiemen, Loeum Lorn and Pio Abad. To mark the opening, artist Hao Jingban will be in conversation with Han Nefkens and Shabbir Hussain Mustafa as part of the SAM30 Festival Weekend, alongside a curator-led tour and a running programme of guided tours, lectures and workshops throughout the exhibitionâ??s run.

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